

Harper: Canada to Leave Afghanistan in 2009...You Missed it, Right?

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Monday, June 25, 2007

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Well, after a weekend to thoroughly digest Prime Sinister Harper's speech to mark the end of Canada's sad and waning 39th parliament, I feel moved to grumble about something he didn't bother to mention formally and officially.

I was going to talk about how he frames taxation as slavery from which we need emancipation, despite all the rich social, educational and health services we receive and largely take for granted: "Largely as a result of our tax reductions in budget 2006, tax freedom day arrived Wednesday, four days earlier than last year."

Instead I want to comment on what he said in a rare moment when he stooped to speak to the press. So many emails from the PMO describe Harper's upcoming schedule. "Photo op only" has become scripture.

So instead of in a formal political speech to end the session of parliament, Harper, on a Friday at the end of the week's new cycle, mutters that Canada will leave Afghanistan in 2009.

Huh? [I kid you not](#):

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who once insisted that Canadian troops will stay in Afghanistan until the job is done, now says the military mission will end in February, 2009, unless the opposition agrees it should be extended.

The acceptance that the mission's lifespan may be limited comes as the Prime Minister faces growing opposition to Canada's combat role in the Afghan south - a decline in support that has been particularly pronounced in Quebec.

"This mission will end in February, 2009," Mr. Harper said yesterday at a rare House of Commons news conference held to mark the end of the spring sitting.

Isn't this major news? The most significant Canadian military mission in decades, the most controversial episode of Canadian imperialism will end because Harper said quietly that we'll stay past 2009 only if all parties in parliament agree.

The NDP is opposed to our presence. Unless they see the light of imperialism in the next dozen or so months, our support for our troops will be supporting them home.

The Globe and Mail covered it on Saturday. Thanks.

But the volitional decision to end our occupation of Afghanistan and cease our imperial agenda there was

not plastered all over the front pages of the Sunday and Monday morning papers.

This is a major victory for sanity in Canada. It is also a major reversal of Harper's militarism in the face of growing national opposition to the stupidity of what we have been trying to convince ourselves we could do there.

And Harper's embarrassment over his decision to radically change his entire war prime minister image made him squeak it out on a Friday afternoon in Ottawa in front of reporters, for whom he holds shocking and tremendous disdain.

Thank God for Harper that they haven't skewered him for it. Lucky man.

Maybe Harper's American Idol speech ending "God Bless Canada" has returned to save him from having to blush over changing his over-inflated sense of his military legacy.

The poor fool.